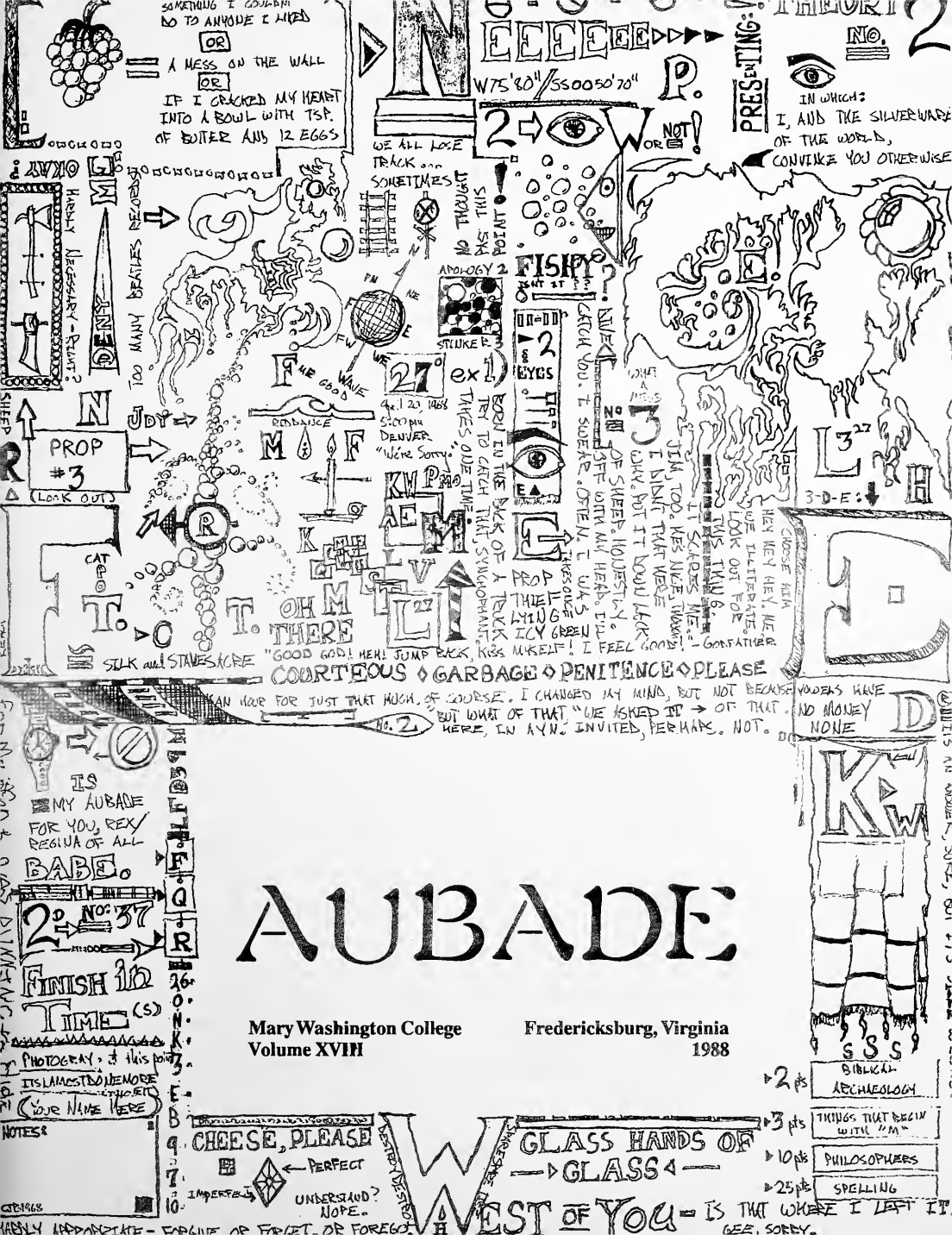


AUBADE

Mary Washington College
Volume XVIII

Fredericksburg, Virginia
1988



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CHEESE, PLEASE

GLASS HANDS OF
GLASS

WEST OF YOU - IS THAT WHERE I LEFT IT

contents:

art

Evan Becker	1, 3, 10
Mike Bodi	43
Jamie Britto	6, 30
Gary Colson	20, 32, 36, 40
Andrea Hoover	21, 45
Jay Immel	11, 41
Robb Kneebone	15
Russell Moeler	37
Pat Quest	18

literature

Tina Barnes	4
Chris Bonner	5, 44
Jamie Britto	35
Taina A. Crotty	12
Dan Dervin	33
Andrew Duffy	19
Don Glover	38, 39
Michael Huff	13, 22, 42
Lisa Kilczewski	17
Peter Mathis	16
Steve Sears	7
Charles Swanson	35
Gregory Francis Triplett	2
Anne-Marie Williamson	32
Anonymous	31

staff

editorLisa Kilczewski

art editors.....Dawn LeTellier

faculty sponsorCarlton Lutterbie

Deidre Mosteller

editorial assistants.....Lisa Alvarez

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Tracey Daniels

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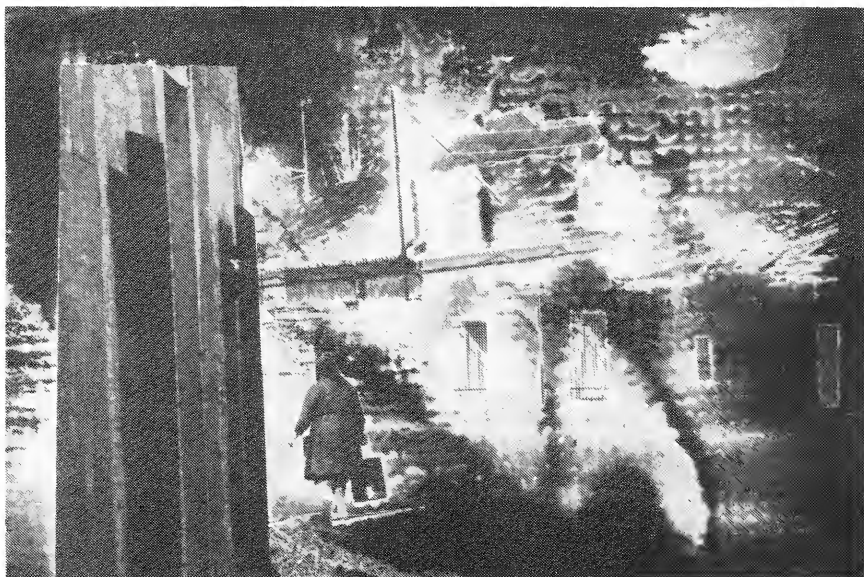
Angelia Hopwood

Richard Updike

Tabatha Yeatts

cover by Chris Bonner

Winner of the 1988 Melchers Prize for Art



Evan Becker

Byrd

elegy for M.B.

I scramble these fragments: Alaska, woman, argument, gunshot
& this skeleton of an explanation
meshes no easier.
Ribs minus muscle.
The story of your chest
halted at thirty years
washed over red.
I see red —
a cardinal pecking grass flaps up to a limb
as I open the screen door
& the skull cap you wore
the first night you played basketball at the park
dunking over the best.
Reid called you "Byrd".
Name or nickname I wondered.
From your jazz-trumpeting father
& possibly thrust upon a slave ancestor in Virginia.
That medallion you often linked around your neck
hinted of Africa.
Alaska puzzles me.
Spaces require leaps.
The cardinal flies to a branch.
You sprang to the rim.
A saxophone climbs scales weaving an interlude
thick with blues.

Gregory Francis Triplett



Evan Becker

The Find

We were archaeologists
digging up ancient ruins
under the huge oak tree
of our Kindergarten yard —
I in my pink-and-white pinafore,
sitting on some boy's coat,
and you squatting in the dirt
in your short skirt,
revealing your under britches
like the "herlots" we saw on Main Street
and wondered what they did
behind those closed red curtains.

We dug until we hit rocks.
"Devil's roof," you whispered,
examining the dirt
on your panties,
"And he's gonna get us now!"

I didn't want to be your friend anymore.
I didn't like the Devil,
so I left you
bending over to examine
the Devil's darkened roof.
The boys were laughing,
but you kept searching
for Hell,
oblivious to them,
smiling and still showing flesh
like the girls on Main Street
that do things behind the red curtains.

Tina Barnes

Toybox

In my room it always rained the hardest.
Big wet bullets smash into my window, breaking into beads
that distort the lights of passing cars and traffic signals
making for me my own grey garden of rainy-day flowers.

Rain dripping from her coat, Grandma smiled
As she pulled from her itchy black-wool Grandma bag
a bent red umbrella
for me.

Dancing gaily through curtains of rain,
I swing my aged, tattered partner, catching the wind
as my grubby feet sink ever deeper into the muddy lawn
with every leap I take.

Steam rises from the scorched asphalt as the storm moves on —
clouds spin and drift in the yellow-grey sky to another town.
The smell of the wet cement and rotting leaves on the sidewalk
meet me and my wonderful umbrella —

my sword, my cane, my spaceship, my shield, my anything —
as we rush to the gutter to watch the rainy-day parade.

Leaves, grass and candy-bar wrappers,
popsicle sticks and oil slicks,
all rush past us in hasty review
careening towards the rusted metal saw
the terrifying distant
hollow sound
of the storm drain

through which
one rainy day
I calmly watched my beautiful red umbrella
gently sail.

Chris Bonner



Jamie Britto

Skywriting

Steve Sears

And I do look up.
Learned to pay attention . . .
There we be, there we go
human faces,
 animal faces,
 nuclear faces.
Hands and arms flailing
is I
skywriting
skywritten.

"I've seen a dictionary's worth of words there. And now I'm trying for that book of world records. Under Human Feats, the man to see the most shapes in the clouds. But you can't just see them, you have to FIND them — it takes skill. I guess you'd just call me very creative. And I have a good eye. You name it, I've probably seen it up there. But they come and go real quick. A lifespan of, I'd say, two to twenty seconds. You have to look with wide eyes. And always be thinking . . ."

Clouds form.
Cumulus, Nimbus —
big words for rare feelings.
Clouds spread
sending good news
or contorting into twisted
visions.
(And has that man ever seen
a Mushroom cloud?)
A certain reality there
in the atmosphere,
and a certain sense
of infinity and
God . . .
(Soon they'll be censoring what we see there . . .)
We watch our eyes and mouths dissolve
as if we were never formed at all.
(And somebody told me to look only with
special glasses or through pinholes in a box.)
I just don't
understand.

"The angle is extremely important. And the timing, of course, is crucial. Always have to be watching for that special sky — gold or streaked with shadows of pink and violet. Sailor's sky, liar's

moon. And all the patterns have given scientific names. But I suppose there's always something left undiscovered or undocumented. At least I hope there is. I don't shoot through filters because it's unnecessary. The spectrum is natural, why force it? I'll just use my wide-angle lense . . . , and the shutter takes the sky . . . "

Where is my
Image Key?
How do I know what it all means?
And I cannot help but look too closely . . .
Why so hard to see what's high
and what's reality?
(Someone said the intangibles would touch me . . .)
So I wait.

". . . it was at first like I had pictured the Star of Bethlehem to be. So radiant and forked with tails of shining white, and windy everywhere. That's how I told the children when they asked what I thought the star looked like. Children like to picture things so vividly, yet they'll accept things on faith just as easily. Anyway, this light, it kept coming down and expanding; I began to realize something very unusual and frightening was going on. But where could we hide? The car was parked so far down the hill. I just stood feeling like the mother in 'Close Encounters'. Don't laugh, I mean it! I clutched my children to me, but I don't think they were afraid. I just stood and trembled with a chill — wondering if we had been picked for this . . . if they had been watching and made some sort of choice. And I realized the hopelessness of the scene — who will ever believe me? Do you? And — please don't think me crazy — I was thinking that maybe these [bows head and smiles] . . . aliens . . . would look like little angels. Remember Gabriel? Do you know all those stories? I mean, I saw it with my own eyes, and so did my children. And now it's so crazy . . . even the Enquirer is calling the house. At least the children in my Sunday school class will believe me. They understand. . . "

And I do look inside . . .
my smallness, immediacy.
(Someone somewhere wrote
"Everything is vital")
and still ephemeral . . .
(like Mr. Greenjeans face
I spotted up there as a child.)
I was a tiny child with an
expansive imagination,
and a willingness to accept
what I didn't comprehend . . .
I'm not a child anymore,
but I still look and question.
Like the whole world has lived
and died there.
And then,
gone to heaven there.

Continued

"I wanted to watch the launch from the best possible vantage point. We were in the stands, the finest seats for miles, with binoculars and coolers and cameras. I didn't understand what had happened until the word spread in a sort of murmuring wave. None of us wanted to be witness to that — sitting there with the families of the astronauts, a very strange helplessness — and yet, I think that we secretly — subconsciously — hoped that we would see something like that. Do you know what I mean? It's scary. I can't believe I'm telling you this. . ."

Some people
just want to be closer to it.
(No one told me; I know this for myself)
Just want to fly and never come down,
be all winds and wind and
navigating instruments . . .
well, I think I can understand that.
There, change is so immediate,
sometimes hard to accept;
You have to be open and
remember what you have seen.
Maybe I know,
we see what we want to see.
Whether it existed —
what we've seen —
or not,
That's the faith.

It's something in your eyes,
I know you look up.



Evan Becker



Jay Immel

Mussoorie Monsoon

The monsoon saturates all
my flimsy umbrella no protection
 against random blasts of water
 tepid waves riding on
 invisible currents
 only to crash
 against my braced body
until I laugh at the futility of it all
and abandoning the umbrella
 I
 race
 through
the
 bazaar
 revelling
 in
 the
 joy
of
 being
 drenched
 and
 not
 caring
 and
 alive
as old Indian men huddled under awnings
scowl and mutter about crazy Americans.

Taina A. Crotty

Haiku of Basho

*translated by
Michael Huff*

The Japanese poet Matsuo Basho lived from 1644 until 1694. Born into the caste of the samurai, Basho became a wandering Buddhist monk in 1681 and spent the rest of his life as a simple beggar.

1

down
at
the old pond

furu-ike ya

a bullfrog
has
jumped
on
in

kawazu tobi-komu

the sound
of water

mizu-no-oto

2

the bird
coos
and
coos

hototogisu

in an old bamboo thicket

o-take yabu-no

the moon

moru tsuki-yo

light seeps through

3

a bright
autumn moon

meigetsu ya

and I walk
around
the pond

and the night is
gone

now lush
summer grass

the vision
of noble braves

this is
and
once
was

how cool
o so
cool

this wall
my feet
touch upon

while I
nap at noon

is
it
of
the spring

this nameless mountain within

the
mists
of
morning

ike wo megurite

yo-mo-sugara

natsu-gusa ya

tsuwamono-domo-ga

yume-no ato

hiya-hiya ya

kabe wo fumaete

hiru-ne kana

haru nare ya

na-mo-naki yama-no

asa-gasumi

4

5

6

so utterly still

it
pierces
into
the
rocks

the
shrill
locust
trills

roaming
I fall ill

my visions
over parched fields

wander
wander still

shizukasa ya

iwa ni shimi-iru

semi-no-koe

tabi ni yamite

yume wa kare-no wo

kake-meguru



Robb Kneebone

love #3

i'm gonna order that
telescope — \$2.98! from krazy
komics and i'm
gonna
scan the sky.

i'm gonna look beyond
the milky way
because i know
there's a planet maybe
blue maybe hot
hot pink
i will read the words written on that star
with my x-ray vision glasses i
will jot them down and wrap them
ever so carefully
in the folds of this poem

and sometimes
once in a pink moon perhaps,
i'll read them out loud to the world
and maybe you'll hear them and
maybe
you'll feel

loved.

Peter Mathis

The Hurricane

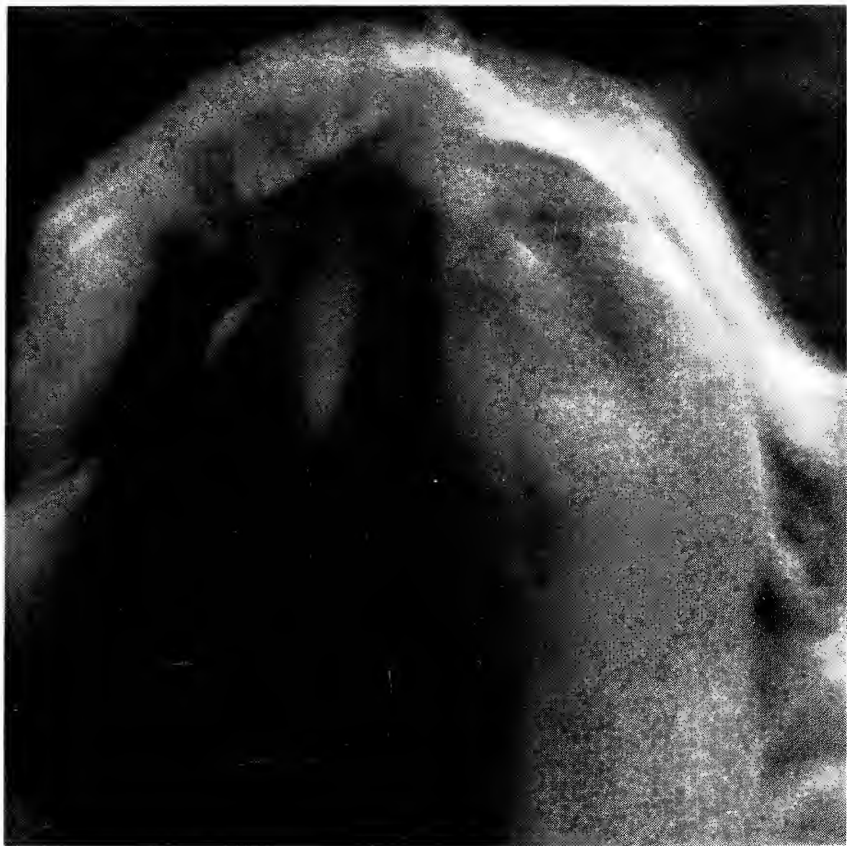
All day
along the cape
the wind cracks against the sides of houses
and the song of the waves grows stronger.
Inside, small black warnings
are sent continuously below
the T.V.'s picture. I take a Tylenol
to silence an old broken bone
and wonder if I should bother
closing the shutters against the rain.
I stand at the window, watching
the sea oats, best prepared of all,
bend and touch the sand
with the wind
and snap back up,
unbroken.

Lisa Kilczewski

Answered

The wood trembles, as I have,
beneath you,
as you guide the saw's teeth
along its chalked path, me
on the other side,
standing with the carpenter's apron
hanging pregnant with nails
around my waist.
In the moments during the motor's scream,
just before the cut breaks
the board cleanly in two
I am sure:
this weight, our work
inside me
is as certain, as comfortable now
as your strong arms around me.

Lisa Kilczewski



Pat Quest

Ants

The young boy sat
with his legs dangling
from a steel chair,
rocking vigorously
as little boys do.

Holding half of a sandwich,
he gazed, barely focusing
on the patio bricks near
his grass stained feet.

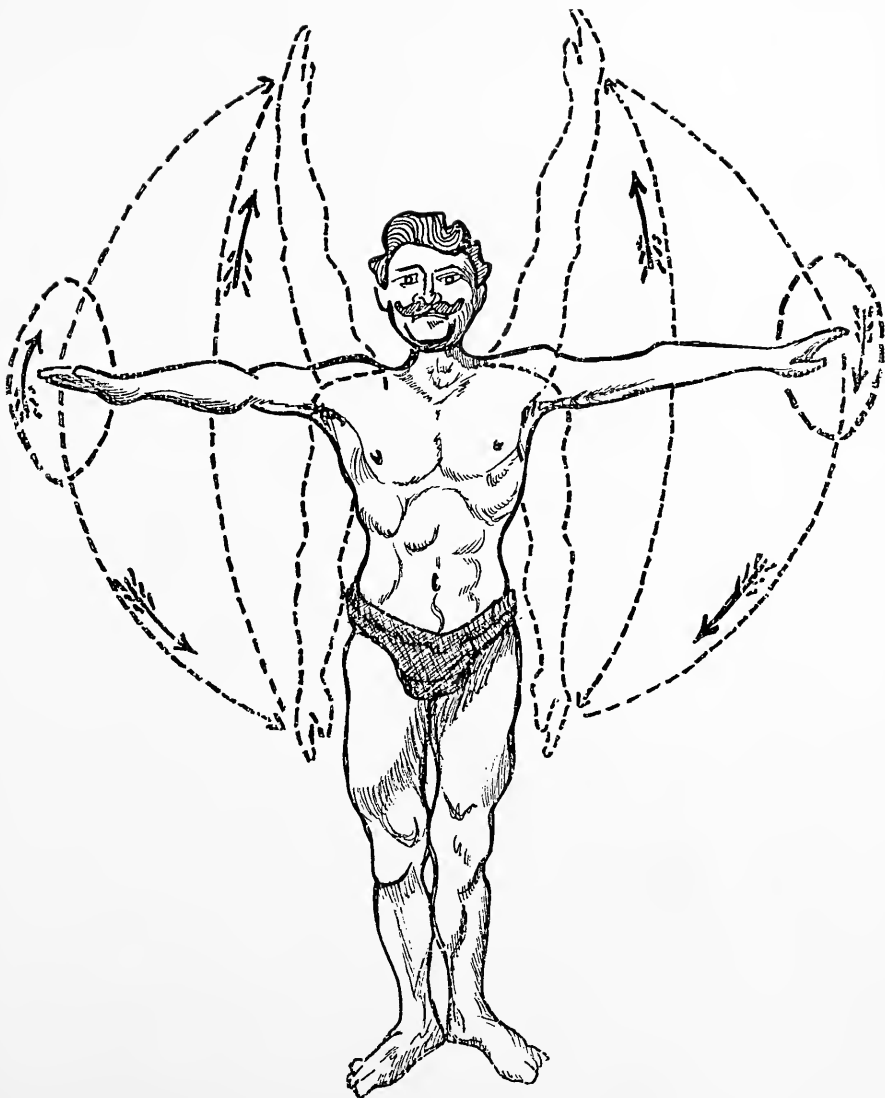
Little creatures he noticed
hauling every speck of bread
fallen from his flaky sandwich.
Thrusting forward, the boy
stopped his moving chair.

All the ants scampered,
happily gathering the
new found food, dragging
it all in different directions.

He remembered when his
father had lifted a wet
log, disturbing their home.
When millions moved quickly,
the white bits about them.

The boy then threw the
rest of his lunch far
into the neighboring woods.
And as he walked away,
a thousand bread crumbs
fell from his hands,
plummeting to the ground.

Andrew Duffy



Gary Colson



Andrea Hoover

Winner of the 1988 Chandler Prize for Literature

The Wheel

Michael Huff

The October day shone with tulip poplar leaves approaching the height of their brilliance, and the morning was brisk and clear. It was early Saturday, and our banty rooster was still crowing, though the dawn had long passed. In a little over two weeks, it would be Halloween, and the time had come to bring in the pumpkins and take them to market.

Father had always planted pumpkins and gourds and Indian corn to sell during the Halloween and Thanksgiving season. Though near all our land was in grain or hay, he never failed to save one corner of the fields for what he called "the fun-money patch." While most of the income from the crops went back into the farm or our basic needs, the cash brought in from the sale of pumpkins always gave our family a little extra for Christmas. So the harvest of pumpkins was always something exciting, for it carried with it the promise of celebration during the coming winter.

Father had gone outside after a breakfast of bacon, eggs, toast, and coffee, always the same, and was hooking the big wagon up to the old Ford tractor, painted bright blue that past spring but already faded by the long summer's glare. I had gone out to the barn with Father, having gotten up early myself and eaten breakfast with him. Little Petey and Cory were still inside, Mother trying to get them settled down so she could dress them in their play clothes.

That day, I would be helping Father to load up the pumpkins. The excitement of work was still fairly new to me. Throughout that year, Father had started letting me help with more of what had always been his tasks about the place. As long as I was able, I had been expected to help out with the chores of living on a farm, but only recently had I begun to gain an understanding of responsibility through the man's work which Father was asking me to do.

I was twelve years old at the time and was a small child for my age. At school, I tried to make up for my size by being a good student. I didn't shy away from any sports or labor, but I just couldn't do too well at either because I was so small. I did do well at my studies, and this made Mother very proud, though Father didn't seem to have much of an opinion about my grades. It wasn't that he didn't like books and learning. Father was all the time reading aloud to us children. His favorite book was Joshua Sloacum's *Sailing Around The World Alone*. Captain Sloacum was the first man to do so, and Father would read to me from this book and would tell me that he and I would one day sail around the world together. I guess Father didn't visibly take pride in my being a good student because he was at heart a quiet man. He was the sort who believed that a thing done well would stand on its own, regardless of what anybody thought about it.

As I stood watching him hitch the wagon to the tractor, I wondered if I would be as strong as he when I got older. Father was tall, and he had the build of a man who had spent his life laboring outside through every season. My eyes settled on his hands fastening the pin in the hitch. Strong, calloused, and scarred, his hands I shall never forget. They looked like the hands of a two hundred year old man, though by his face, Father looked a little younger than his forty-five years. The tips of the three longest fingers of his left hand were missing from an accident he'd had when he was a youth working a brief stint with the railroad. He had been helping to lay rail one day when one of the long steel beams came across his finger tips, shear-

ing them off. Father always considered himself lucky in that he saw the rail coming and was able to jerk partly out of the way or he might have lost his whole hand.

"You fed the dogs yet, son?" he asked without looking up.

"No, sir."

"Better do that 'fore we get going here."

"Yes, sir," I answered and hustled off.

We kept the dog food in a big galvanized trash can around the back of the unpainted barn. When I had filled the bowls, I stepped over to the corner of the barn and called out for the dogs to come and get it.

"Here Blacky! Here Max! Here Max! C'mon boys! Here girl! C'mon Dutch! Good girl, Dutch, c'mon!"

And Dutch came loping along first, followed by Blacky and Max, falling all over one another, chewing on each other's ears, rolling around in the dust, wagging their tails, growling and barking, and just having the best time in the world being dogs.

I called Dutch, and she came to me while the other two fools barrelled over each other trying to get to their food bowls. When they saw I was giving old Dutch a scratch behind the ears, Blacky and Max came lummocking on over and pretty soon all three were jumping up on me and finally pushed me over and were licking my face like mad while I giggled and laughed.

They finally settled down and turned to their food. I sat up and wiped off my face, still kind of half-laughing. They were great dogs, and I loved them all, but Dutch was my favorite. She had been with me since I was three years old, and we were the best of friends. She was part Irish setter with a tuft of white hair in the center of her chest. She loved to be scratched there. She had been the runt of her litter, and her right eye was funny. She really couldn't see out of it, but she still got along as well as either of the other two dogs who were still only pups.

"Hey, Josh," Father called, "C'mon, let's get going down to the field, son!"

And back around the barn I went. Father had started the tractor, and it was idly rattling in the morning air. Mother had brought Petey and Cory on out. The children were always together as they had not yet started school. Both had ruddy faces and deep, shiny blue-black hair like Mother's. Little Petey was dragging a branch behind him which I guess he'd picked up as soon as he came out of the house. He was always picking things up. The dogs had come around the barn and, as soon as they saw the children, ran over to them. Cory was trying to climb up on Max's broad white back, and Petey was trying to fend off the affections of Dutch and Blacky. Mother laughed as she shooed the dogs away and took the children by their hands and brought them on over to the wagon.

There had been another child, John. He was two years younger than me, and my brother and I had been inseparable in both fights and games. I was eight years old when John died, killed by influenza. All I can remember of his death is how Mother wept for days.

In the four years since John had died, Mother had been saved by Jesus. She had always been a church-going Christian, but, as she told me many years later, it was only after her son's death that she understood who Jesus was and why God had come among the people. Father once told me that when John died, it nearly killed Mother.

Father used to tell us that Mother was an Indian princess whom he'd kidnapped from a tribe of blood-thirsty savages out in the wild west. Mother would laugh and tell her husband not to lie to the children, but Father would tell us to look at how pretty our mother was and ask if we could but doubt if she were an Indian princess. And it was true. She was dark and tall, with a noble Roman nose and a high, sloping forehead, and her hair was the longest and the blackest I have ever seen.

I reached down from the back of the wagon and helped Mother lift the children up onto the thin layer of straw scattered on the wagon's bed. She told us to be careful and that she would bring lunch down to the field for us. She waved at Father, and he waved back from the seat of the tractor, and with a lurch the machine began chugging toward the lower field by the river where the pumpkins sat ripe for the harvest. The dogs ran barking after the tractor's racket, and the wagon gently rocked and bounced behind the tractor.

Autumn lay heavy on the fields. The daytime chirping of crickets, so different from the night, was accented by the far-off cawing of crows flying into the upper field where they would glean the chaff for grain left untouched by the combine. Titmice and slate-colored juncos flew among the golden-rod and drying yarrow by the side of the gravel road which led to the lower field. Above the clanging of the tractor's engine, I thought I heard the cry of a red-tailed hawk somewhere down by the woods along the river; and then I was certain of it as I heard a squirrel screech out an alarm. The purple staining berries of the pokeweed were ripe, and the thorny seed pods of the deadly jimson weed were beginning to split open, spilling their contents on the waiting earth.

And then, all glory and fancy, the pumpkin field came into view. The great orange fruits lying on the ground seemed pregnant with the season.

"Pum'kins! Pum'kins!" shouted little Petey.

"We gonna pick pumpkins, Josh?" asked Cory.

"Sure are," I answered.

Father pulled around to the edge of the field and shut off the tractor, and I lifted the children down from the wagon. Dutch and Max came soon behind, being before kept back by some sort of dog business which was still keeping Blacky barking in the brush by the side of the road.

"Well, what do you think, son?" Father asked.

"I think we ought to pick some pumpkins."

My little brother echoed, "Pum'kins!" And the dogs barked while the children shouted.

We got to work, Father lifting the bigger pumpkins onto the wagon and I, the smaller. You had to watch it, picking up the larger ones, because sometimes black widows would spin webs under them and feast on the squash bugs that flourished in the pumpkin patch. Petey and Cory mostly ran around the field, playing with the dogs. Blacky had given up on whatever was in the brush and had joined Max and Dutch in playing with the children.

After a couple of hours of bending and lifting and walking back and forth, I started to get tired, and just as I was getting winded, Mother showed up with a basket for lunch. Father, now bare-chested in what was becoming an Indian summer day, put one more pumpkin on the half-filled wagon, walked over to Mother, kissed her, and gave a terrific holler which made the children shriek with excitement. Mother blushed and called Father an old fool.

"If a fool I am, I'm a hungry fool," he said with a big voice. "What sort of feast have you brought this hardworking crew?"

A feast it was. There were pickles and bologne sandwiches on fresh baked bread and apples and pears and a big jug of iced tea. Father was kidding around quite a bit, and everybody was in a laughing mood. Mother even gave in a little and broke up half a bologne sandwich for the dogs to have as a treat. The children were making messes of themselves, and we all laughed at them, but Mother had to pretend that she didn't think it was funny. After she wiped off their faces a little, though they were really a total mess from playing in the field, Mother gathered up lunch while Father took a smoke.

"You know, Violet, I think we'll make enough this year to be able to take the trip at Christmas to see your folks."

Mother's eyes sparkled.

"Well, we'll see, Paul," she said seriously as she folded up the picnic blanket. "Never can tell what might come up."

But her eyes still danced.

"Ya'll be home in time to clean up for dinner," she told us.

"You want Petey and Cory to help you carry that stuff home?" Father asked.

"No. I'll leave them here to keep you straight."

Mother kissed us all goodbye and started walking home. Max followed behind her while Dutch and Blacky remained with us.

After Father finished his cigarette, we got back to work. He put me up on the wagon and handed the pumpkins to me to stack.

"Now be careful how you put 'em, Josh, so they don't all come rollin' off. That a boy; you got it," he smiled.

After a few more hours we had a full load of pumpkins, ready to go off to market where they would be sold to people who would make them into jack o'lanterns or pies or sweet breads. It was beautiful, all that orange massed together in one place, and I had helped to plant, hoe, and harvest it.

"Good job, son. What do you say we get on home and wash up for dinner."

"Sure thing, sir," I said, tired but proud that I had kept up all day.

Father lifted the children into the wagon, and the children laughed at the pumpkins.

"Now you children sit still and behave yourselves," Father told Petey and Cory. He looked at me. "You want to steer the tractor, Josh?"

I paused, and my eyes widened. "You sure?"

"Sure, I'm sure. You can sit in my lap, and I'll work everything while you steer."

"Okay!" I shouted.

"Okay!" he laughed back.

Father climbed into the seat and lifted me onto his lap. I had steered the tractor before during the past summer, but it still excited me to sit behind the wheel and control the course of the big machine. Father started the engine up, put it in low gear, eased up on the clutch, and away we rolled back on home. Blacky and Dutch ran around us and barked at the clanging engine of the old Ford. The dogs nipped at each other's tails and jumped on each other's backs, full of energy after a nap in the shade beneath the wagon.

I steered on, my eyes intent on the gravel road. Father turned around, making sure the children were sitting still.

"You children behaving yourselves?"

"Pum'kins!" Petey yelled.

"You better believe it, pum'kins!" Father laughed. How I loved his laughter.

Then the terrible thing happened.

From behind the tractor, the piercing whelp of a dog in pain cut through the air. Father pushed in the clutch, stopped the tractor, and turned around.

He shut the tractor off.

"Get down, son." His voice was deep and rumbled.

I jumped down from his lap and ran around behind the wagon to see what had happened, Father a step behind me.

Blacky hung off on the edge of the road, whimpering, his tail between his legs. There, lying in the rut of the road, yelping and snapping at the air, trying to pull herself forward with her front legs, was Dutch, her hind-quarters crushed and twisted from the weight of the wagon load of pumpkins rolling over her. Somehow, in their playing and tumbling, the dogs got in the way of the wagon, and before Dutch saw what was coming, she fell beneath the wheel.

"Damn it. Damn it." Father crouched down by the dying dog.

Cory had started to cry, while I stared on without yet understanding.

"Is she going to be okay, Dad?" I asked.

"I don't know, son. I wish I could tell you." He paused and looked at the ground. "Listen, I want you to walk the children home. I'm going to take her up to the barn."

Father took the children out of the wagon, Cory sobbing and Petey wide-eyed, and then he put Dutch into the back of the wagon. He ran up to the tractor, started it up, and drove off. With Blacky following us, I took the children by their hands and started walking toward home, the tractor and the pumpkins and Dutch slipping into a cloud of dust further on down the road.

"Dutch killed?"

"No, Petey. Dutch ain't killed," I snapped back.

Petey fell silent, but Cory kept crying. Dutch couldn't be dead. She was my partner. I owed her. After John died, Dutch and I did all the things that John and I used to. I really owed her, though, more than I would ever be able to repay.

About two years after John had been buried in the church graveyard, and right around the time Mother had found Jesus, Dutch saved my life. I was messing around down by the river and playing fetch with Dutch and running around the tall grass in my bare feet when I stepped right dead on a two-foot copperhead. The snake struck hard and sank its fangs into my right foot. I screamed and kicked, and the snake shook loose, and I passed out cold. Then, I guess Dutch grabbed the copperhead and shook it to death. She started barking and running around like crazy. Father was working in the lower field, and when he saw and heard Dutch, he came running.

Father saw the snake lying there dead with Dutch barking at it, and he knew right off what had happened. He knew how to suck out poison and did so without a second thought. He took his pocket knife and cut over the fang marks and began sucking and spitting, sucking and spitting. I was still out cold, and Father later said that when he got done with what he could do, he lifted me in his arms and ran like a wild stallion to the house, Dutch on his heels the whole way.

They got me to the hospital, and I guess things were pretty close. I was delirious for nearly two full days, and I am told that Mother did not leave the side of my bed for more than a minute or two during that whole time. She kept vigil and prayed to God not to take another child from her so soon.

I recovered and soon returned home where Dutch and I were showered with affection knowing no bounds. I loved that dog. She saved my life, and I was indebted to her beyond mere friendship.

Mother was waiting at the top of the road to take the children, and before she could say much to me, I ran for the barn where the wagon load of pumpkins sat parked. Father was hunkered down outside the barn, smoking another cigarette. There was a shovel on the ground in front of him.

"Where is she?" I asked.

"Son." His voice was grave.

"Where is she?"

"Dutch got hurt real bad."

"Where is she?" I demanded.

"She was getting to be an old dog and couldn't take much of a beating."

My lower lip began to quiver.

"I'm sorry, son."

"Is — is she in there?"

He nodded.

"Can I see her?"

"I don't know if that's a good idea, son."

"I got to see her."

He took a deep breath and let his cheeks half-fill with air and gave a kind of whistling sigh. He stood, put his hand on my shoulder, and together we walked into the barn. The smell of hay hung in the air, and swallows chattered in the rafters above. On the floor of the barn, Dutch's body lay covered with an old canvas sack. My eyes began to swell with tears, and my nose was starting to run. I slipped from beneath Father's hand and knelt on the floor by my dead friend.

I pulled the canvas off of her. She was still so warm, but her chest did not rise and fall like it did when I watched her sleep. Her nose was still wet, but no breath came from it. Here and there, a flea crawled through her shining red hair. Her left eye was still moist, but could she see me?

My stomach clenched.

"I better dig her grave," I said with a voice not my own.

"You don't have to do that, son. I can get it."

"No. I want to."

Father did not know what to do. "You sure?" he asked.

"I'm sure."

"You want some help?"

"No."

I pulled the canvas back over her, stood, and walked back out to where the shovel lay.

"I'm going to dig it up on the edge of the woods."

"That's fine, son. You sure —"

"Yes."

I picked up the shovel and set off in the direction of the woodlot on the hill above the barn, to where the fields began and rolled down down toward the river.

About half-way between the barn and the woods, I could no longer hold back. Though I kept walking, I began to shake with sobs. My vision blurred with tears, and I could hardly catch my breath. I wailed, and I keened, and I stumbled like some penitent pilgrim across the field, the shovel as a staff in one hand, the other hand a clenched fist beating at my side.

When I came to the forest's edge, I stabbed the spade deep into the ground, and furiously I began to dig, enraged at the earth. Every time I hit a root, my anger soared, and I would gash and tear at it until it broke free of the ground. My sobs ceased, and I was tense with an unyielding purpose.

The freshly turned earth filled the breeze with its musky scent. Beneath the topsoil and most of the roots, the ground turned sandy, and the digging was easier. Within an hour or so, I had dug the grave.

I looked up, my vision clear and my thoughts exhausted, and I saw him still standing at the corner of the barn where I had left him, looking up the hill to where I stood. I stepped out of the grave and began to walk back toward Father.

I had left the shovel at the grave, and my hands were swinging freely at my sides as I walked when suddenly my palms began to sting. I held them up to look at them, and immediately they

throbbed. They were blistered and raw from my frantic digging. There was one cut, on my left hand where the scar still shows, which was crusted with blood and earth. As I walked, my back began to ache and my head to pound.

As I approached Father, he walked toward me. From his look, I don't think he knew what to make of me at that point. I knew not what to make of myself.

"Are you okay, Josh?" His voice carried worry.

"Yes."

"Why don't you go inside son. I'll finish up."

I looked over by the pumpkin wagon and saw that he had put Dutch's body in the wheelbarrow.

"I want to be there when she's buried."

"I don't know, Josh. You ain't yourself. Maybe you better just go clean up."

"Please, sir."

There was great sadness in Father's eyes.

"I don't know, Josh."

"Please, Father."

He looked up the hill toward the grave.

"Let's get this done before it gets dark." Father tried to smile and he laid his hand on my head. He walked over to the wheelbarrow, took hold of it and started up the hill. As I paced behind him, I looked over toward the house and saw Mother on the backporch. She waved at me, and I waved back.

At the grave, I watched Father lay Dutch in the ground, and I broke into sobs once again. He took me in his arms and rocked me back and forth, and somewhere beyond my senses the crickets chirped their late afternoon song as the first quarter moon rose high in the eastern sky.

After awhile, I quit crying, and I looked west to the setting sun, down across the fields and toward the river. The silhouette of a great blue heron glided low over the trees down in the river valley. The fields were deep red in the late day's light, and the pile of orange pumpkins down by the barn glowed with a light all their own.

It was then that the vision of the memory came upon me. As Father shoveled earth onto the body of the dog, and as I sat not far from the grave's edge and stared into dusk, a great remembrance of John and me and Dutch came washing over my fatigue. It seems to me now that, as I sat there, it was the first time I remember remembering.

About a year before John died, in the earliest spring when the peep frogs were just beginning to sing, Father had made some bullroarers for John and me. A bullroarer is a flat, oblong piece of wood, a little more than half a foot long. It's tied to the end of a long cord, and you swing it over your head in a great, fast circle. As the bullroarer cuts through the air, it makes a low howling sound, like the distant roar of thunder. Our bullroarers were made of black walnut, and Father had carved little diamond designs on them.

John and I were up outside the barn. The daffodils and purple crocus dotted the backyard of the house with tufts of awakening color. In the still slumbering dogwood by the house's side, a wood thrush sang in sweet flute-like measures. My brother and I stood in the bright sun and swung our bullroarers against the sky. Their deep moan cut across the fields. Barking and growling, Dutch ran round and round us and sometimes jumped into the air trying to catch the noisemakers. I would swing mine hard, and the roar's volume would rise, and John would let his drop to a low hum, and his laughing blue eyes caught mine as we rejoiced in the music we made.

As Father firmed the earth of the grave, the roar of the memory filled my head, and my

vision faded, and I fell to the silence of sleep. I briefly came to in Father's arms as he carried me home through the cool dusk.

The next day, after a sermon about the fate of unbelievers, our family crossed the churchyard and passed through the iron gate leading into the graveyard. We always visited John's grave every Sunday after church. Mother held my hand, and Father held the hands of Petey and Cory as we walked down the slate path to the final resting place of our beloved son and brother. Petey and Cory never really understood, because they had both been infants when John died. And until that day, I had never really understood. As I stood there holding Mother's hand in mine, it wasn't the loss of John that I felt. No, it was something of myself that was gone, and that is what I vaguely thought of, as I stood there at the grave of my brother and listened to the laughing church bells ring noon.

Back home, after a big Sunday dinner, Mother read from the Bible to us, as she often did. She read us the story about how God made the world and all that dwelt upon it, as it was one of her favorite stories. And that night, before we went to bed, Father read to us about how Lewis and Clark crossed through the Great Northwest, and I sat dreaming about sailing around the world.



Mozart, oh
Mozart.

my grandfather died
yesterday.
his heart fell asleep
and all my friends

are sure to follow
now what? don't you see?
i need
a wind serenade
to drift me far

i need
a second coming
won't you descend?
and ascend again?

take me away
in the folds of your cloak
festered and rotten
from your pauper's grave

as my grandfather lies
in your unused casket
i'll sing to you both

an unsung requiem.

anonymous

I keen for you.

I carry you with me
everywhere.

I look I

look I

look —

my head keeps turning

my hands toying

lingering over

jawlines

hipbones

searching for that jutting edge.



I waste away
to run ragged nail bites over
hard
sharp
planes this way
I keep you near.
There is no exorcism no
ridding myself of your
imprint
you still inflame me like
religion.

Anne-Marie Williamson

Gary Colson

Czechmates

Too hard to feel for Humanity, just too
Hard, said my friend who speaks in the tongues once heard
In the Spielberg, most notorious prison in Eastern Europe,
Now a People's Museum that absently echoes old Slovak, Swedish,
Polish, Hungarian, Tuscan, off its scabrous walls; Spiel-
Berg, the old fortress atop a hill as mere "playful mountain,"
Nature's human image, a game, a performance without mirrors
Other than its own self: summit, center, or tomb — take your pick

And your shovel; dig, and soon you unearth the open secret:
Grave alike to the Eastern fringe of the French Revolution,
Imperial troops, Moravian gentry, common miscreants, Carbonari,
A founder of modern Hungarian letters, an illfamed soprano,
The day's most daring theatre Artists, beloved Jesters, Spinners
Of folktales — what duets, what debates, what Dialogues beyond
Plato's saddest dreams; what tortures,
What starvations, what unrecorded flights of Madness —
Even before it was modernized into a Nazi concentration camp,
And the Soviets liberated for good their Czech neighbors —
Too hard to feel, he would say; some Rock, so I would agree.

But once a pretty Castle upon a time
Etched above a trim Seventeenth-century
Town, once a higher Center, presiding and defining,
Full of feudal majesty, wisdom, and Mystery —

History, I hate it, said my friend, who knew
Mirrors' rhymes and reasons better than most,
And supported Poets against the State
Because Poets bell for Freedom,
And paid for their bellowing, I'd noted reluctantly
Below the walls; though now the cause is Prague,
Is Belfast, is Belgrade, is Leningrad.

Is Santiago, is Warsaw, is
Amnesty International — whom we paid

And now we paused along the winding descent
To view the forgotten city of Brno at our feet —
The thriving produce stalls under multicolored Parasols
Figs and shelled walnuts heaped atop old copies of Pravda,
The Cathedral purged and doused for the traveling Pope,
The red trams wavering among crowded Pedestrian squares.

A People without Poetry, a language lacking vowels — began
My friend, who disconcertingly speaks in the historical present
And knew Brno's lively little wine-cellars by heart,

As well as the hours they kept; yet neither of us
Knew if Brno was incomplete without its unknown U,
Or why (Unable to grant amnesty
To the receding Spielberg) we pass through a world
That dare contain its Best within the worst?

Nor, coming down to it, could we locate
In our prevailing politiscape of gravespeak
A Vocabulary of sufficient Spirit to liberate
The captured Vowels or entice the barbarous Consonants
To free us from the garden-variety spielbergs
Of the close-guarded Heart.

Dan Dervin

On Seeing Death in a Loved One's Face

Too friendly is death, though not a friend,
Too eager to sidle close and lay his hand
With guile upon an unexpected arm and smile.
His hot breaths up from the swamp on wind
Like wraiths, or apparitions joined in bands
Who come as children come to your house and stand
Outside your windows, beckoning for your child,
With foggy faces pressed against the panes.
You are that form in the casket there, that friend,
Cold as a stone, and wretched like flayed bone —
A corpse picked clean and left in the sun to age.
Too intimate, death; too close in the face of a friend
(Cheeks anguished eddies, eyes opaque). And you groan —
Embraced by decay, cognizant of an end.

Charles A. Swanson

Upon Being Murdered

six inches of dirt
hid me from the rest of the world
from the german shepherd's nose and the policeman's eyes.

two years ago
I kicked and screamed then bled.
My life poured out onto him and the ground.
I fell still
He moved quickly
scraping the earth till he could hide me beneath it.

a new world unfolded above me
I felt the sun warm the soil
and the moon inhale that heat
I heard a rain drop
slide silvery smooth
on a blade of grass
and trickle through
the soil down
to me

Jamie Britto



Gary Colson



Russell Moeler

Jack-in-the-pulpit

Arisaema triphyllum
Indian turnip

You lie in wait,
Wrinkled corm coiled
Ready to feed the ancient
Indians or cure their ills.
Sprung to growth,
You shoot like a
Jack-in-the-box
To stand purply rigid
Under your striped canopy,
Swaying as you preach
Yin-Yang.
Retired by the Fall,
Your transformation to
A single blazing clump of
Crimson berries
Belies the myth
Where man and woman
Ate the fruit and died.
You ripen from sex
To seed.
And then you sink,
Season stricken
To lie again and wait.

Don Glover

Bathing

Up at camp it's rustic,
Swayback beds, no privacy —
The water pulled from the lake
Unfit to drink — the spring
A heavy trek away.
There's no bathing unless
You are clever enough
To splash your private parts
In the sink.
I choose the lake and boathouse.
The July water is
Icy on toe and foot.
Brave bathers plunge.
Timid and wise enough
I spot the rocks just
Feet below, and ease in,
Squat down and turn
To see between the surface
And the boat door's clearance
A solitary, silent canoeist
Watching.

Don Glover





Jay Immel

Homespun

The
 spinning
 wheel
 whirls around,
 its maple spokes
 blurred with speed.

The spinner rocks
 back and forth,
 her treadle foot
 keeping
 time.

Her
 fingers
 fan
 out the wool
 and pinch and pull
 shredded threads

to twist to yarn
 glistened gold
 in sheaths of oil
 rich
 with
 light.

She
 hears
 the
 wheel
 gently hum
 and clings to that
 which is sound.

Michael Huff

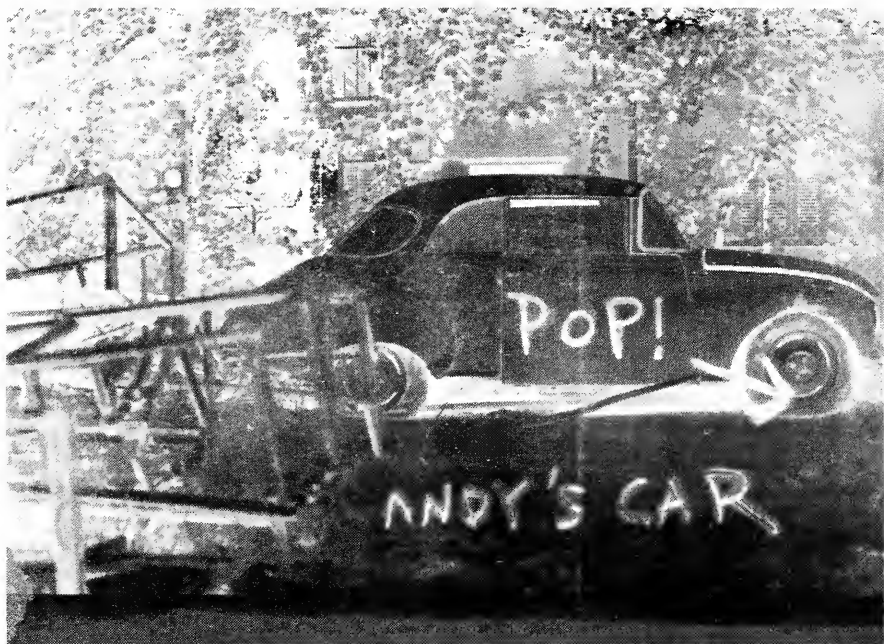


Mike Bodi

Mommy

As I wait for you
a warm breeze sends crumpled newspapers tumbling and floating down the street
visible only within the pale green circles of streetlights.
Silky sheer curtains in the hallway billow and ripple slowly,
as if under the clear water of some lazy river,
casting no shadow on the floor
always spotted with square puddles of moonlight flowing in through small windows.
I wait for you
every year
on this day
you glide down the hallway
your soft footsteps gently padding along the woollen threadbare rug
stopping only to straighten a photograph, yellow and cracked with age
maybe poking your head into a bedroom,
pulling the sheet from the foot of the bed to the shoulders
of my sleeping shivering daughter
whom you loved so much.
Mostly you pace the creaky, ivy-covered balcony
all night slowly gently back and forth
your hands clasped in anxiety
your back bent with maternal love and worry
watching
waiting.
As the crack of light from the opening door spreads slowly across my bedroom
I watch you check to see if I am covered and fast asleep.
I know you loved me.
I wish I could tell you that
so you could finally stop
worrying
and rest.

Chris Bonner



Andrea Hoover

